Oil Exploraton by Foreign Investors

3566. SHRI SUNDER SINGH BHANDARI; Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) how many foreign investors have been attracted for oil exploration so far in the country;

(b) whether the incentives are to be made available only after they strike oil;

(c) what other incentives are going to be offered to them; and

(d) how the ONGC is likely to be affected by the policy?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI T. R. BAALU): (a) The number of foreign companies who have submitted bids for oil exploration in the country under various bidding rounds are given below:—

Round	Number of foreign companies who submmitted their bids
First	6
Second	NIL
Third	8
Fourth	21
Fifth	5
Sixth	9
Seventh	5
Eight	6
Joint Venture Exploration Programme	10

(b) to (d) Only some of the companies that bid for contracts have been awarded the contacts. The incentives and obligations of the companies are governed by the tripartite Production Sharing Contracts signed with them by ONGOOIL and the Government.

Under the New Exploration Licensing Policy (NELP), ONGC and OIL will have a level playing field with private companies. They will be paid international prices of oil for discoveries made in blocks awarded under the NELP as also get other fiscal and contract terms offered to private investors. At the same time, they will have to compete for obtaining Petroleum Exploration Licenses (PEL) on competitive basis instead of the existing system of granting them PELs on nomination basis.

Implement Modified Tatkal Scheme

3567. SHRIMATI URMILABEN CHIMANBHAI PATEL: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is proposed to allot more and more LPG agencies throughout the country with the introduction of modifed Tatkal scheme of LPG connection; and

(b) if so, the details thereof, State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI T. R. BAALU): (a) and (b) There is no proposal to allot more LPG distributorships exclusively for or on account of Tatkal scheme. However, based on the Oil Industry viability norms, 858 LPG distributorships have been proposed by the Industry in the LPG Marketing Plan 1996-98 all over the country. These distributorships will also take care of the LPG demand arising from Tatkal scheme.

Demand for Fixing Regular Royalty on Crude Oil

3568. SHRI BRAHMAKUMAR BHATT: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the rate of royalty on crude oil had been fixed on *ad hoc* basis from time to time in the past;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the crude oil producing States have represented, to the Union Government to fix a regular rate of royal'y, on the basis of other minerals in the country;

(c) if so, the decision taken by Government in this regard; and